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de
magazine
zeen

Bright yellow Friedman Benda exhibition explores comfort in furniture

By Kristine Klein

January 15, 2020



Omar Sosa curated the exhibition Comfort for Friedman Benda

A chair made from loaves of bread and a toilet-cum-sink are among the objects on display in an exhibition at Friedman Benda that aims to find a "new form of pleasure" in furniture.

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All of the objects are on display in a room with yellow walls and plush yellow carpeting to create an experience that is both immersive and difficult for visitors to process. Spanish-born creative director Omar Sosa curated the exhibition titled *Comfort* as part of the New York gallery's annual presentation of a guest-curated show. Sosa included sculptures, paintings and furniture pieces that all discuss the conditions of comfort.

"I think comfort is very subjective, it really depends on every person and something could be very comfortable for one and for another could be really horrible," Sosa told *Dezeen*. "It's not something that is really measured by any kind of measurement."

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Loaf by Sam Stewart upholsters a chair with loaves of bread that visitors are encouraged to tear off and eat chunks of

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"Combining utilitarian objects, sculptures, photographs and paintings into a visual landscape meant to provoke engagement from the viewer, Comfort investigates comfort's relationship to aesthetics and the tension that occurs when an object can be physically comfortable, but visually or psychologically uncomfortable, and vice versa," said Friedman Benda.



John Chamberlain's couch from 1970 comprises a polyurethane foam structure draped with a white parachute

All of the objects are on display in a room with yellow walls and plush yellow carpeting. Sosa chose a bright colour because he wanted something that was both immersive and difficult for visitors to process.

"I wanted an immersive experience, something that when you're here, you're in a sort of a cloud and everything keeps it together," the curator said. "With yellow, I wanted something that was a little bit difficult and I think I did succeed on that."

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To create Climate Confusion Assistance BLESS designers Ines Kaag and Desiree Heiss strung dozens of cushions onto a hammock

"Most of the time comfort is against feeling, when you're in your comfort zone you feel less, less pain or fear but you also feel less pleasure," Sosa added. "I hope what people take from here is let's just do things in a different way, but eventually make a new form of pleasure."

American designer Sam Stewart created a fibreboard chair upholstered with loaves of bread, baked by Millers and Makers, for the exhibit. Visitors are encouraged to tear off and eat chunks of the bread from the body of the chair.



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Also on display is a couch designed by American sculptor John Chamberlain in 1970, which comprises a polyurethane foam structure cloaked in a white parachute.

In the centre of the room, a hammock made from dozens of pillows hangs from two columns. Cushions were strung onto the lengths of hammock rope to form the piece called Climate Confusion Assistance designed by German studio BLESS, founded by Ines Kaag and Desiree Heiss.



Worker's Delight massage chair by BLESS features a gold plated brass frame, wool and polyester cushions and a bookstand

The German designers also designed the Worker's Delight massage chair made with a gold plated brass frame and wool and polyester cushions. It also has a bookstand attached beneath the head rest cushion.

Sosa included pieces that explore the intersection of comfort and technology. End of Broadcast III by German artist Wolfgang Tillmans is a large inkjet print of television noise mounted on Dibond aluminium with a frame surrounding it, so it looks like a real television.

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To explore the intersection of comfort and technology Sosa included End of Broadcast III by Wolfgang Tillman, a print that looks like a television screen

For Linear Sequence, Andrea Zittel has attached a powder-coated steel and aluminium frame to a rectangular chair. Inserted between bars of the metal frame are three cushions and two oiled plywood table surfaces. The piece is intended to combine western and eastern definitions of comfort.

"I wanted to bring the discourse of how West and East sit in a different way, you can almost split the work in two" Sosa added. "Half of the world you sit on the floor the other half you sit in chairs."

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Linear Sequence by Andrea Zittel fixes a linear metal frame to a chair to combine western and eastern definitions of comfort

A sink is attached to the back of a toilet in a piece by Spanish designer Guillermo Santomà titled Toilet Sink. The sculpture, which casts porcelain in plaster, is displayed in its own little room with dimmed lights.

Also on show is a blue bookshelf that rests on an angle designed by Ettore Sottass and a galvanised steel chair and matching table by Japanese designer Isamu Noguchi.

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Guillermo Santomà's Toilet Sink comprises a sink to the back of a toilet

Omar Sosa is a Barcelona-born New York-based creative director, editor and publisher. In 2008, he co-founded Apartamento, a publication focused on interiors.

Comfort is on display at Friedman Benda in New York 9 January to 15 February 2020.

Friedman Benda opened its New York City gallery in 2007. Other recent exhibitions there include rare and limited-edition furniture designs by Italian architect and designer Gaetano Pesce and collection of works by Heatherwick Studio, Paul Cocksedge and Nendo that celebrate Generation X.

Photography is by Daniel Kukla, courtesy of Friedman Benda.